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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 11/27/09

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ARTICLES:

(1) LDP Okinawa chapter fails to reach decision to demand relocation of Futenma base out of Okinawa

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)  
November 27, 2009

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Okinawa chapter held at the Prefectural Assembly building on Nov. 26 a general meeting of its Assembly members to discuss the Okinawa chapter's position on the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station. While a majority demanded the Hatoyama administration relocate the Futenma facility out of the prefecture, there was also the opinion that the group should persist in its policy hitherto, in order to realize the early removal of the danger posed by the Futenma base. No consensus was reached at the meeting.

Okinawa chapter Vice Chairman Tetsuji Shingaki and Secretary General Masatoshi Onaga will meet with Nago Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro on the morning of Nov. 27 and hold a general meeting of LDP Assembly members again in the afternoon of the same day to decide on a policy. Assembly members elected from Nago, the proposed relocation site under the current plan, and Ginowan, the site of the Futenma base, are cautious about relocation out of Okinawa, making it difficult to reach a consensus.

Governor Hirokazu Nakaima continues to maintain his position that "while relocation out of Okinawa is the best option, relocation within Okinawa is inevitable as the realistic option." Furthermore, municipal assembly members and supporters of Shimabukuro in Nago,

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where a mayoral election will be held in January, call for careful handling of this issue in light of the impact on the election. At the meeting on Nov. 26, there was an opinion that Nakaima and Shimabukuro need to coordinate their policy. Onaga said: "Some Assembly members asked that a conclusion be reached through careful discussions. We are in the final stage of drawing a conclusion."

(2) U.S. military base land: Defense ministry pays contract renewal cooperation fees to landowners every 20 years; 3.6 billion yen to be paid in fiscal 2012

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)  
November 26, 2007

It has been learned that the Defense Ministry pays 100,000 yen to each landowner who provides their land for the use of the U.S. military as a contract renewal cooperation fee every 20 years. The ministry is expected to pay 7.2 million yen to 72 landowners in fiscal 2010. The amount to be paid in fiscal 2012 will jump to approximately 3.6 billion yen. This will likely stir up a controversy at the Government Revitalization Unit (GRU).

Of the U.S. military land in Okinawa, 81 square kilometers is private land owned by 40,500 landowners. The Defense Ministry renews land lease contracts with them every 20 years, in principle, based on the Civil Code. The ministry paid 100,000 yen to each landowner as a contract renewal cooperation fee when it renewed contracts last time.

It paid that amount once in around 1992, 20 years after the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972. The renewal this time is the second time. The number of landowners whose contracts are to be renewed in fiscal 2010 is only 72 and the number for fiscal 2011 is only 50. But the number for fiscal 2012 is 36,000. The amount to be paid to them will jump to approximately 3.6 billion yen.

No such money has ever been paid to landowners who refused to sign such a contract or the 6,500 landowners who provide their land to U.S. military troops stationed on the mainland.

As reasons for paying such money only to landowners in Okinawa, the Defense Ministry Facilities Administration Division's land acquisition office explained that the payment is to reward the hardships the landowners underwent during the 40 years following the

end of the Second World War, when their land was confiscated by the U.S. military, and the base-hosting burden they are bearing at present.

The number of contracted landowners has increased proportionately to the increase in the divisions of lots. The number of landlords whose contracts are to be renewed this time has increased by about 7,000. As a result, contract renewal cooperation fees will increase by 700 million yen. The amount of future payments is also expected to rise further.

(3) National Public Safety Commission chairman not to seek custody of U.S. soldier before indictment in Okinawa hit-and-run case

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1) (Full)  
November 26, 2009

Tokyo - At the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on  
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Nov. 25, Chairman Hiroshi Nakai of the National Public Safety Commission commented on the U.S. Army staff sergeant who has refused to present himself for questioning in the hit-and-run incident in Yomitan Village. He said: "We have not reached a stage where it has become impossible (for interrogation to take place as the prefectural police requested)." He indicated that in light of the U.S. forces' cooperative attitude, it is premature to demand custody of the suspect before indictment at this point. This was in response to a question from Taro Kono (Liberal Democratic Party).

After the incident occurred, government officials have expressed the opinion that "it seems that the question of transfer of custody before indictment will not be an issue" (Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano). However, the suspect has refused to present himself for questioning for over 10 days and the government still insists on dealing with this case within the bounds of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement.

From his previous experience as senior vice minister of foreign affairs, Kono pointed out that refraining from demanding the transfer of custody before indictment is premised on the Japanese side's unimpeded questioning of the suspect. He asserted that this condition has not been met in the present case. Tetsuji Nakamura, parliamentary secretary of justice, responded that, "We are summoning him. We have not reached a stage where the condition is not being met." Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada also stated: "With regard to the question of whether a demand for transfer of custody will be made if the condition (that conducting the questioning is possible) is not met, this is not necessarily a case where the reverse is always true," indicating his position that this case does not require a demand for transfer of custody.

Nakai said: "We will proceed with the investigation in two ways: Ask the U.S. forces to make further efforts to persuade him to appear for questioning and gather various evidence to prove that there is no doubt (that the staff sergeant is the culprit) even if the suspect does not confess, since he has already admitted to driving the car (in the hit-and-run incident)." He explained that investigations are taking place with the aim of building a case even if the suspect is not available for interrogation. He said that refusal to appear for questioning is a "very unusual situation." "This is probably because lawyers were appointed on Nov. 14 (when he began to refuse to appear for questioning)."

(4) Budget screening team calls for deep cuts in funds for diplomatic establishments overseas

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
November 26, 2009

Takashi Sudo

In its second day, Nov. 25, of the second round of budget screenings, the Government Revitalization Unit scrutinized such fields as education, diplomacy, science, and technology.

Diplomatic establishments abroad were also reviewed.

China has far more diplomatic establishments than Japan in Africa and other areas. There are 166 Chinese embassies across the world compared to Japan's 133. In Africa alone, China has 48 embassies, which far surpasses Japan's 28. China is aiming to increase its

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influence in resource-rich African countries. Japan and China are now engaged in a fierce battle, with Tokyo also sending businessmen-turned-ambassadors to Africa.

But on Nov. 25 panel members did not debate such issues, but focused on staff compensation and swimming pools, tennis courts, and other facilities at ambassadors' residences. Foreign Ministry officials explained that the monthly salary for an embassy worker in Washington who has been with the ministry for 15 years includes basic pay of 470,000 yen plus an overseas allowance of 510,000 yen. They also maintained that the amount is not especially high, citing the fact that among members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Japan ranks 18th in pay for staff at diplomatic establishments in Washington. Nevertheless, the cost-cutting panel concluded that various allowances for staff at diplomatic establishments overseas should be slashed.

(5) Review of "sympathy budget" may trigger new dispute with U.S., with fierce reaction from base workers union in Okinawa

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)  
November 27, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told reporters yesterday: "Although the sympathy budget itself is a political budget agreement between Japan and the U.S., it is necessary to examine whether the current labor costs are proper." He thus emphasized the significance of having Japan's host nation support (HNS; the so-called omoiyari yosan or "sympathy budget") open to review for possible cutbacks. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has called for reducing the nation's HNS budget ever since it was an opposition party.

In its report titled "Okinawa vision" compiled in 2008, the DPJ specified that the host nation support budget should be trimmed, on the grounds that the current burden-sharing has not been fully reexamined. In the Diet the same year, the party opposed a plan to conclude a special agreement with the U.S. to extend HNS for another three years. The reasons included that operators of pleasure boats, animal handlers, and other recreation staff are among the base workers whose salaries Japan pays, and the non-transparency of utility and facility-maintenance expenditures.

But the DPJ has assumed the reins of government. If it continues to call for cutbacks in HNS, that will inevitably spark a new dispute with the U.S.

About 75 PERCENT of all U.S. military bases in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture. There are 9,000 Japanese base workers in Okinawa. Of them, about 6,500 are members of the Okinawa Branch Headquarters of the All Japan Garrison Forces Labor Union (Zenchuro). Their distrust in the Hatoyama cabinet is now growing because of its proposal to cut base worker salaries. Okinawa Branch Headquarters Chairman Eizo Yonaha commented: "The government, while placing a heavy base burden on Okinawa, is calling for cutting base worker salaries. If that is the case, the base burden should be equally shared across the nation."

The DPJ had secured no seats in single-seat constituencies in Okinawa Prefecture before the general election in August, but the party won two seats in the election owing to support from Zenchuro. A union member grumbled, upon seeing base worker salaries targeted for review: "I wonder why we supported the DPJ. ... The party

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betrayed us."

This issue also will unavoidably affect Japan-U.S. relations. For the U.S., Japan's HNS is a test case to see if Japan intends to continue the Japan-U.S. alliance.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated when he visited Japan in October: "The defense umbrella (provided by the U.S.) has protected Japan for nearly 50 years. This has made it possible for Japan to contain its defense budget to 1 PERCENT of its gross domestic product." His assertion can be interpreted to mean that since Japan's defense spending has been minimized due to the Japan-U.S. alliance and the presence of U.S. military bases, it is natural for Japan to pay the costs of stationing U.S. military bases in Japan.

Japan and the U.S. have been at odds over the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. Against this background, if the government decides to slash the HNS budget, there will be additional friction between the two countries. Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa is skeptical of reviewing HNS. He said on Nov. 13: "If HNS is included among areas for review, Japan could fail to send an accurate message at home and abroad."

(6) Budget-screening panel plunges scalpel into Foreign Ministry budget

ASAHI (Page 3) (Abridged)  
November 25, 2009

The Foreign Ministry's budget is no longer a sacred cow. The Government Revitalization Unit cut deep into the Foreign Ministry's budget in its screening session yesterday. It is difficult to evaluate the propriety of foreign affairs budgetary allocations based only on cost-benefit analysis. The screening process has disclosed that the ministry possesses a sense of cost far different from the average person's. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada also intends to examine how to handle the issue.

On the first day of the second round of the budget request screening process resumed after a lapse of one week, the unit plunged a scalpel into Foreign Ministry projects including those related to international conferences, international cooperation, and grant aid.

About 20,000 staff members, including trainees, in the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA; President Sadako Ogata), an independent administrative institute under the Foreign Ministry, make overseas business trips annually. Their traveling expenses took center stage in the budget screening.

A screening team member from the private sector snapped: "There is no private company that uses business-class tickets these days. Ordinary people travel economy class or on cheaper air tickets." JICA rules mandate that Japan Overseas Cooperation volunteers or non-governmental organization members fly economy class, executive members of foundations and specialists travel business class, and the president and the vice president travel first class. It has been found that JICA prepares business- or first-class full-fare tickets for more than 75 PERCENT of all overseas business trips.

Last year "the project team to eliminate wasteful spending" set up

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by the Liberal Democratic Party, a ruling party at that time, addressed the problem of JICA's high travel expenses. A responsible official of the Foreign Ministry explained "the results" produced by using discount tickets for some travel in accordance with the LDP's advice and emphasized: "It should be possible to reduce travel outlays by 700 million yen from now."

Sumiko Kosemura, a screening team member who also attended the LDP screening process last year, claimed: "I pointed out last year 'it will be possible for JICA to reduce travel spending by 4 billion yen if it makes use of discount tickets,' but the amount has not decreased at all."

The problem of high wages paid by JICA was another topic during the

session. The JICA president's annual income reaches 22.16 million yen, and the average salary of its staff is at the highest level among all independent administrative agencies. The Laspeyres index of JICA staff's average salary, with public servants' average salary set at 100, is 133. A Foreign Ministry official emphasized their duties' distinctiveness, remarking: "JICA members are frequently transferred. Some are even assigned to places to which Japanese company employees do not go." A screening team member pointed out: "JICA should compare its salaries with those of similar institutes." JICA has not made an international comparison.

The Foreign Ministry also came under fire. Japan will host an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum summit meeting next year. The government agencies concerned had requested a total of 19.1 billion yen on Aug. 30 during the days of the Aso administration. They reduced the amount to 17.2 billion yen in their requests on Oct. 15 under the Hatoyama administration and then further to 16.6 billion yen before the start of the screening process.

According to their explanations, they managed to cut the amount by reducing accommodation fees for state leaders and cabinet ministers in negotiations with hotels. A screening team member gave the ministry instructions in negotiating: "You took the wrong approach to price negotiations. You lost in negotiations the moment you asked hotels their prices."

In the screening process, the corporations that have offered lucrative post-retirement posts for bureaucrats also drew attention. The Japan Institution of International Affairs, in which senior Foreign Ministry officials have secured post-retirement posts for many years, have received state subsidies for 50 years since fiscal 1960. The ministry has requested 420 million yen for fiscal 2010. The screening team called for a halt to subsidies for the corporation, with one member remarking: "It is unclear whether the institutions are privately owned corporations or state organs."

(7) Finance Ministry also questioned over Defense Ministry's outsourcing practices on eighth day of budget screenings

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
November 27, 2009

Keigo Narusawa

On Nov. 26, the eighth day of budget screenings by the Government Revitalization Unit, Democratic Party of Japan House of Councillors member Renho locked horns with the Finance Ministry's budget

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examiner even though they were supposed to agree to cut budgets.

The third working group focused on a plan to increase the number of Self-Defense Force personnel. The Defense Ministry sought an additional 3,500 personnel (costing some 7.2 billion yen), citing the need to improve and increase the frontline personnel responsible for measures against terrorism and North Korea, while playing up the ministry's restructuring efforts including the outsourcing of its food services and clerical work to private companies.

A screening team member and the Finance Ministry's budget examiner made clear, however, that the outsourcing to the private sector has not helped the Defense Ministry reduce its costs. Parliamentary Secretary of Defense Akihisa Nagashima promised to properly review the ministry's outsourcing practices. "The approach presented by the parliamentary secretary will probably bring no change to the current situation," the budget examiner said, painting a gloomy picture.

This prompted Renho to criticize the Finance Ministry in defense of Nagashima, asking: "Why has the Finance Ministry allowed (the Defense Ministry to continue with its costly outsourcing practices) for all these years?" Sensing an unfavorable situation, the budget examiner replied, "We didn't realize it until last year."

(8) Foreign minister Okada alarmed at possible cut in total sum of ODA budget

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)  
November 25, 2009

In a press conference yesterday, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said: "The various comments made from an unprecedented point of view provide me with very useful information." He welcomed the results produced in the screening process on Nov. 24 in general, although he refrained from mentioning any specific projects.

Even so, the Foreign Ministry cannot easily make concessions on the government's official development assistance (ODA) budget, which is an essential tool for Japan's diplomacy. But the Government Revitalization Unit called for reducing one-third of the nation's grant aid to construct such facilities as hospitals and schools and using the reduced portion for soft infrastructure support. This policy direction could lead to reducing the total sum of the ODA budget.

The Foreign Ministry's International Cooperation Bureau Director General Masato Kidera told reporters after the screening session: "There is a great demand for facilities. ... I don't think anyone suggested in the session that aid for constructing facilities should be stopped. I would like to think about what should be done on a priority basis."

Okada also took precautions in the press conference yesterday, saying: "If the total sum of the ODA is affected, it will turn into a policy debate." Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama pledged in his speech at the UN General Assembly in September: "We will strengthen our aid for developing countries in terms of both quality and quantity." Bearing this pledge in mind, Okada asserted: "This major policy pledge made by Prime Minister Hatoyama cannot be easily changed."

(9) Warrant of arrest issued to divorced Japanese woman by

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Australian authorities for "kidnapping" her children

ASAHI (Page 33) (Full)  
November 24, 2009

Mariko Sugiyama

A 36-year-old Japanese woman living in Osaka has been on the wanted list for nine months on charges of kidnapping.

A warrant of arrest has been issued for her in Australia for returning to Japan with her two daughters, aged 10 and 5, without her ex-husband's consent. However, she will not be arrested because Japan has different laws. Nobody knows that she is on the wanted list.

There have been numerous cases of Japanese women returning home from their countries of residence with their children after their international marriages have failed. According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs statistics, there were 168 such cases involving women returning from the U.S., the UK, Canada, and France as of October. In September, an American ex-husband who attempted to take back his children forcibly after his Japanese ex-wife brought them back from the U.S. was arrested by the Fukuoka Prefectural Police.

We contacted this woman who returned from Australia in our attempt to find out why such cases continue to occur. She met us at a coffee shop in the JR Shin-Osaka station and told us with a sigh: "I had no other choice but to leave everything behind and flee." She began to tell us her story.

She went to Australia under the working holiday scheme in 1995. She could hardly speak any English but men often asked her out. One of the men who approached her most enthusiastically was her ex-husband.

"He said to me every day: 'You're so beautiful.' And to be honest, I was infatuated with the idea of an international marriage at that

time."

She married when she was 22 and started working at an American company. The couple took out a loan of 20 million yen to buy a house. They also had a child.

However, the husband gradually stopped bringing money home. The wife resumed working three months after delivering the baby and was paying for everything from the mortgage to the husband's spending money.

"I had been thinking about a divorce all along, but about four years ago, I found out from documents in the computer that my husband was suing banks and insurance companies left and right, and I was terrified. We had 20 million yen in debt, so I finally made up my mind."

Two years ago, the procedures for a judicial divorce were completed, and the court ruled that the children would live with her. However, unlike under Japanese civil law, which gives parental rights to only one parent, both parents shared parental rights.

The ex-husband began to call her and send her e-mails about the children frequently after the woman remarried. He said things like

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"their hair is cut too short" or "let them take ballet lessons instead of karate lessons."

In January 2008, the ex-husband filed a court case making 14 demands, including having the children live with either parent every other week and permission for him to travel with the children for three weeks during the spring break.

A psychologist appointed by the court to interview the children reported that the elder daughter strongly refused to see her father. However, even after the woman won the case, the man appealed. The legal expenses totaled 16 million yen.

"I was under intense psychological stress. My hands trembled when I used a knife for cooking. I thought if I died, I would be free from that man."

In late 2008, her mother in Japan called her to inform her that her father was dying. She came to her senses and decided to return home with the children.

Last January, she boarded the plane with just one suitcase containing a few clothes. As the cabin door closed, tears welled up in her eyes. She thought: "I will finally be able to live a normal life."

In Japan, where there is a strong tendency not to interfere in civil affairs, it is very rare for a warrant of arrest to be issued for a parent who takes his or her children out of the country. However, in Australia, which basically adopts the principle of joint parental authority, it is not even possible to move from one town to another without the other parent's consent.

One week after the woman's unauthorized return to Japan, the court granted sole parental authority to the ex-husband. The verdict says that "a warrant of arrest will be issued unless the children are returned to Australia in 21 days." She told the lawyer who contacted her that she had no intention to do so.

She was prepared to be put on the wanted list.

Last September, the ex-husband filed a case with a Japanese family court to seek a ruling allowing visitation rights with the children. He claimed that "(his daughters) would gain a lot from seeing their father and it is unacceptable for them to be separated from their father forcibly and illegally based on the mother's wishes."

Western countries have been increasing their pressure on Japan for not signing the Hague Convention, which stipulates that children who have been taken to another country by their parents should be



returned to their original country of residence.

This woman, who now lives with her present husband and her children, thinks that it is ideal for children to maintain contact with both parents after a divorce. However, Japanese wives like her who returned with their children even if they had to violate foreign laws to do so probably had no other choice.

She says: "If Japan signs the Hague Convention, it should also take measures to help Japanese citizens and children who are in distress overseas."

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Her children were born in Australia. However, this woman, who is on the wanted list, can never visit this country again.

ZUMWALT